

THE MORNING NEWS

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2014 King and Queen of Dande and "King of Kings" Edjean Semeleer are crowned



L to R: King of Kings Edjean Semeleer, King of Dande Danilo Vrolijk, Minister of Tourism and Culture Otmar Oduber and Queen of Dande Hilyann Croes

ORANJESTAD -- Beginning at 8:00 PM on Saturday evening, December 28, the 40th anniversary Dande Festival and Competition was conducted at Club Caiqueto in Paradera. This ultimate demonstration of Aruba's traditional holiday music, usually performed by wandering minstrels, did not finish until 6:00 AM the following morning. Dande music has a definitive form, and while the beat

and chorus is a welcome to the New Year, the lyrics of the stanzas will often be personalized to describe the households welcoming the roving bands, most commonly with humorous results. It is a beloved part of the performance for the lead vocalist to pass a hat, and each member of the audience shows their appreciation for their performance with a donation.

For this year's Dande Festival,

there were 14 female and 32 male vocalist competing for the titles of Queen and King of Dande 2013, as well as a competition among former winners to select the "King of Kings." Thirteen musical groups provided back-up for the entries.

Aruba's Minister of Tourism, Transport, Culture and Primary Sector, Otmar Oduber, was present at sunrise to crown this year's King and Queen of Dande. The winners were: King Danilo Vrolijk, accompanied by the group Alma Folklorico, and Queen Hilyann Croes, backed by the band Tipico Allegre Kadushi Largo.

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Coming in second and third place in the Dande King competition were Jason Kelly and Robert Maduro; second and third for the queen crown were Haidy Boekhoudt and Marlene van der Linde.

Noted island vocalist Edjean Semeleer, a former Dande King in the years 2004 and 2011, competed against other winners from previous years to be named "King of Kings" of Dande.

A number of traditional, beloved compositions were performed, but also original, new songs were presented, further keeping this end of the year ritual alive. First place award for original composition went to: "Chopi Cho", by composer/singer Chicho Kock, with Tuyó

Herrera, accompanied by the band Tipico Macuarima. Second place trophy went to: "Rey di Mundo", written and composed by Robert Maduro, and Mark Maduro, and sung by Ruth Gaarie, with band Alma Folklorico. Third place for an original song was won by "Tiro di Fin di Aña", composer/arranger Mario Kelly Jr. It was performed by Darwin Gomez and the band Sonido di Antaño.

Besides the standard of Dande songs, there were awards for groups performing another regional music form of the ABC island, Tumba. First Place winner was: "Luz di Shelo na bo Porta" composed, arranged and performed by Danilo Vrolijk and Mark Maduro.

The first place winner of the Best Performed Traditional Music was "Fiesta Anima," a tumba by noted composer Juan Chabaya "Padu Lampe, performed by Tipico Macuarima. The waltz by Rufo Wever, "Aruba," performed by the group La Bomba, took second place, and another tumba, "Dalila," by Egregino Ras and performed by the group Tipico Flamboyon, won third place.

By Rosalie Klein